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The attitude of the peasants toward government dates from the days of Turkish rule, when the chief aim of a citizen was to deceive the tax collector. The same spirit was still prevalent in Dragalevtsy in 1937. Furthermore, government had taken such a large share in the affairs of daily life that the peasants had come to feel that government, rather than individual effort, should introduce any reforms or improvements. Typical attitudes were the following:

"In general we have enough sense to know that government is necessary, but we do not expect any favors from it except to keep peace and order and to settle disputes."

"Government exists primarily to collect heavy taxes for the purpose of paying high salaries to high officials."

"Laws are things to be written in books and not to be obeyed. There are so many laws that we don't know them. The officials don't even know them. So we don't have much faith in laws."

While these political changes were occurring, things were happening to the large individual family which had come into being with the breaking up of the zadruga. Some of the forces had already been at work before the Liberation but became more evident with the westernization of the country. The impact of westernization was shown by the fact that the Bulgarians still said when they were going to western Europe, "I am going to Europe." That is, psychologically they still felt identified with the Near East, although they were more and more exposed to the material achievements of Euro-American culture. Education, whatever may have been its shortcomings, had spread rapidly and brought many individualizing tendencies; there had been an increase in commerce, which made it difficult for large family units to be as self-sustaining as formerly. The wars also, by quickening social mobility, proved harmful to the large families. One of the younger men listening in on a group of old cronies in their endless discussions of the good old days summed up the change:

"During the war [1915-1918] and after, people traveled more to other places and saw how people lived there, so we have become more modern and started dividing our estates according to the fashion. We can now live more quietly and peacefully by living separately."

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with a relationship as deep-rooted as that of the Balkan peasant to his land, he is also creating the seeds out of which a spontaneous resistance movement could grow. There is little evidence of collectivization at present, but the peasants are not convinced that it is not just around the corner.

Then too, the Balkan peasants, especially in the settled agricultural areas, have not taken kindly to Communism because they characterize it as an urban movement. When seasoned Communists try to converse with peasants about the merits of the Russian system their factory-oriented dialectic falls flat. Nor have they developed an agricultural vocabulary with which to communicate intelligibly with the rural people. The more the Balkan Communists talk, the more the peasants are convinced of the urban orientation of the new government. They consider it anti-Agrarian and anti-peasant. In an attempt to overcome this reserve to their program the Communists organize deputation teams of artisans who spend Sundays out in carefully selected villages helping the peasants repair their wagons, mend their pots and pans, or they even bring along a corps of barbers to cut the villagers' hair. The spirit behind such a move is to have the artisans show by their deeds, "You see, we are your friends. We're all brother Bulgarians [or Yugoslavs, as the case may be]." But it takes more than this to sell such a radical program as Communism to the capitalistic-minded peasant.

The rural villagers elsewhere in the Balkans, as well as in Dragalevtsy, resent the term worker. Newspapers studiously attempt to get the worker ideology accepted by the rural citizens, but the social statuses of the peasant and the worker are such that the government is asking the former to step down a rung, in the peasant's estimation. So Communism is thought to represent a backward rather than a forward move, and is related to the all-important matter of land: the peasant generally possesses it, whereas the worker is usually landless.

Many analyses of the Balkan problems play up rightly the role of the church, whether it be Eastern Orthodox or Roman Catholic, in the peasants' lack of enthusiasm for Communism. Others stress the generations-old nationality antipathies which have some influence. Certainly Pan-Slavism is not paying high dividends in rural areas in

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spite of heroic efforts by Russian ballet and athletic troupes who tour the provinces of all the Balkan lands. Other writers seek to show that modern Communism is merely a fulfillment of the traditional Communism of the zadruga, but they fail to point out that the zadruga was built around the family and land owned by that family, whereas modern Communism is centered around an impersonal state and ideology. To shift their loyalties from the family to such a state or to replace their religion with a new ideology is asking a great deal of the relatively inelastic peasant mass. State loyalties in the past were built upon joining the army and fighting, even to death, when one's country was threatened, but in times of peace one returned to the native village and had as little as possible to do with the national government after that. But the new turn of events in the Balkans seeks to whip up enthusiasm for the government, morning, noon, and night, when all that the peasants ask is "Please leave us alone."

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The future seems to hold little peace for the landed peasants. Russia is in the Balkans to stay. Granting no American armed intervention, only some great upheaval in the heart of Russia itself could weaken the grip of the present National Front governments to the point that the opposition in the Balkan countries could take over the control. Given enough time, the Communists can coerce compliance and can train up a new generation which would enthusiastically repudiate the past, thereby consolidating the Communist position.

The process will, however, not be one-sided. The peasants of the Balkans will in turn influence Communism and indirectly help fashion a type which, like Chinese Communism, is somewhat different from that imported from the Kremlin. (Since this was originally written, Tito's failure to push the collectivization of the Yugoslav peasants has gotten him into trouble with Moscow.)

Americans then must more and more regard the area as Russian-occupied, a conquest of war, which the Reds will continue to dominate because of their advantageous diplomatic and geographic position. Out of their occupation Russian sympathizers have argued that two decided gains would come: the lessening of the nationality and ethnic differences, which have heretofore been such a fertile field of ex-

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466 crime against the state and put within the proscription of Communist criminal law. Any transgression on the part of a worker is, therefore, a direct offense against the state authority. It is easily understandable why Communist criminal law has engulfed the great part of matters which usually pertain to labor legislation, and why even the latter is punitive rather than protective in character.

The basic legal documents related to labor law and relations in Communist Bulgaria are the constitution,[7] the Code of Labor[8] and the Statute of the Trade Unions.[9] They, of course, are supplemented by various acts which, according to the Communist doctrine of "normative acts,"[10] can and do supersede previous legislation, no matter what governmental body originated them.

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461 According to the constitution, labor, besides being "a right," is "a duty and a point of honor for every able-bodied citizen. It is the duty of every citizen to engage in socially useful labor and to work according to his powers and ability."[11] Of course, it is the government which enforces the observance of this constitutional norm and establishes the "social utility" of the work done. In practice, "the duty to work" is exemplified in the complete regimentation of Bulgaria's labor force.

464 Two governmental agencies, the Office of Labor Cadres and the Main Board of Labor Reserves, are especially entrusted with the registration, distribution, recruitment and complete control of all available manpower from 14 years of age upward. Their basic tasks are, in Communist language, "to register the available labor force by finding and keeping at hand, through registration, all employed and unemployed workers; to find them appropriate jobs and, with respect to the fulfillment of the Five-Year Economic Plan, to meet the needs of the industrial, constructional, and other enterprises by guaranteeing to them the necessary manpower . . . . Workers who leave their jobs arbitrarily and without excusable

[7] *Izvestiya na Presidiuma na Narodnoto Sobranje*, Year II, No. 91, November 13, 1951, in Bulgarian.

[8] *Ustav na Profesionalnite Suyuzi v Narodnata Republica Bulgaria* (Statute of the Trade Unions in the People's Republic Bulgaria), approved by the Third Congress of the Bulgarian trade unions, December, 1951 (Sofia: *Profizdat*, 1952), in Bulgarian.

[10] In Communist jurisprudence, any act of a central governmental authority prevails upon preceding legislation, without distinction of formal superiority. The "doctrine of normative acts" is summarized in United States Department of Labor bulletin cited at footnote 1, pp. 5 and 6.

[11] Art. 73.

THE PASSING OF DEMOCRACY

an amnesty commuting or completely abrogating such sanctions as had been inflicted on their partisans for the illegalities committed by them. The Minister of Justice pointed out on December 29, 1931, that since 1881, 35 amnesties had been voted. There was no deterrent to crime, and this is why crime is more prevalent among the State functionary class than among any other in Bulgaria, since the Bulgarians are certainly the most moral and honest people in the Balkans, and it was the perversity, short-sightedness and cynical selfishness of the politicians which was leading them astray. This deplorable state of affairs was the inevitable consequence of the malevolent foreign influences to which Bulgaria was subjected, and of the too-advanced political Constitution, with which she suddenly found herself endowed; for centuries of slavery do not constitute a good training for the rational exercise of liberty. This combination of adverse circumstances has led to a catastrophe, which is at once political economic and moral, and which seems almost complete, for the Bulgarians are beginning to lose faith in themselves.

The same portents that heralded the downfall of the first and second Bulgarian empires, became again visible. Antagonism between the people and the State was increasing, the people had lost faith in their leaders, who were incapable of sacrificing their private ambitions for their nation's welfare, or of emerging from that stifling atmosphere of personal squabbles and intrigues, in which they lay enwrapped. The counterpart of the rascally boliars of yore was supplied by the demagogues of the Agrarian party, who, like the tyrant in Plato's „Republic" considered „that it is easiest to rule over a hard pressed community for the taxes they have to pay will impoverish them, so that they will be compelled to give their minds to getting their daily bread, and not to conspiring against him," and who do not scruple to instigate the masses to appropriate

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the hard-earned property of their political opponents, thereby driving the more stable elements to aggressive reaction. The problem of renovation is all the more difficult owing to the national psyche having been perverted by centuries of slavery. It turned the Bulgarian peasant into an extreme egotist, into a man who had no notion of what social solidarity connoted. Excluded for so long from participation in public affairs, he came to view them with extreme suspicion, as something separate from his existence and antagonistic to his private interests. Being treated by the Turk as he was previously by his own nobles, and actually by the inteligentsia as an inferior, he came to consider himself as a being apart, in opposition to all the world.

Experience taugh him that wealth was the only means by which he could improve his position, and ensure for himself a measure of respect. Hence his grasping and individualistic propensities. His extreme individualism makes him refractory even to Socialism, for he feels that his instincts are in harmony with anarchism, rather than with the methodical theories of Karl Marx.

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The Bulgarian has further developed another lamentable characteristic: that of a boundless disrespect for the law. The law was looked upon as an instrument of extortion, to be used by those in power for their own ends and to be modified or broken by them at their own pleasure. The law has never been for the Bulgarian a system under which the rights of the individual were safeguarded. The widely-diffused notion among members of advanced communities that the law embodies the common conscience and the common interest, not only has not percolated into the depths of the nation, but has not even penetrated the superficial strata of its leading circles, and until recently one witnessed the most iniquitous illegalities being committed by the party in power, which abuses, though they

11: Logic S-4 (no date) 1936 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

rouse to fever-heat the indignation of the foreigner, leave the Bulgarian indifferent. It is this lack of public spirit and an extreme self-centredness which renders him apathetic to the wrongs inflicted on others, and which prevent the creation of an alert public opinion capable of checking such misdeeds as the country has been suffering from.

Such is the social inheritance of the Bulgarian. It is with such a mentality that he has emerged to free life. It would be erroneous however, to assume that psychically the Bulgarians stand at a lower level than their neighbours, or that being a backward people they deserved the dismemberment they sustained by the Treaties of Berlin and Neuilly, to the profit of the other Balkan peoples who are more or less of the same mentality, and what is worse, do not excel by those stirling household virtues of the Bulgarians, that go some way to counterbalance their shortcomings, which could be eradicated by a proper system of education.

The high level of the spate of demagogy which submerged Bulgaria was attained soon after the termination of the world war, when her enemies had disarmed her and when, through the weakening of the military factor, the peasant politician Stambuliiski, secured complete control of the state machine. The country then experienced all the horrors of a jacquerie. The evils engendered by the Agrarian regime are tersely set forth by Kosturkov, the capable and outspoken leader of the former Radical party, in a speech delivered in the Sobranye on Sept. 4, 1925: „With few exceptions every Bulgarian government had sown the seeds of corruption and demoralisation, they also however left some positive creative work to their credit. Stambuliiski's regime, however, has left behind an indelible furrow of corruption which it will take scores of years to remove; it is a moral scar that will be most difficult to cure. Moral perversion has been disseminated by the authorities along

11: Logio S-4 (no date) 1936 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

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village and start inundating them in a spate of demagogic rhetoric. The orators of each political group would start vituperating and abusing their rivals, thus undermining completely the prestige of the intellectuals until the peasantry came to look on all with undisguised hatred and contempt. There has not been an example of such a deep cleavage within a people in recent times except in Tsarist Russia, with the well-known consequences, and if something is not done to assure the peasantry that the State will henceforth uphold and protect their interests, and instil in them the conviction that the abuses of the past are definitely over, we may well be anxious as to the future, for however self-sacrificing and patriotic the rulers of Bulgaria may be, the task they have shouldered is a stupendous one and the organs they must depend on for carrying it out are not as reliable as could be wished. And yet it is through the efforts of this „intelligentsia" that the country will have to work its way upwards, for the salvation of countries, the evolution of which has been retarded, depends on the predominance of urban civilisation over rural backwardness.

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It is of undoubted interest to record the views of one of the leaders of the sole political party which was actuated by a true conception of democratic principles and which persistently upheld them, but which failed to rally round it sufficient supporters to impose them because the Bulgarian elector expected to get some direct advantages in exchange for his vote, a practice the Bulgarian Radicals always denounced and fought against.

Thus M. Kosturkov speaking in the Sobranye on December 21, 1926 said among other things:

„We are with servile souls. A nation impregnated with a sense of freedom and having a sense of self-respect does not allow the authorities to usurp its liberty and its rights. It is always ready to place its rulers in their due place. I am not indignant at the servi-

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lity of the masses but at that of the greater part of the intelligentsia, and it is in disgust that I hear their servile speeches when in presence of influential men. According to me none can equal our average man for his envy and our demagogues exploit to the utmost this sentiment. Instead of combatting this inherent defect we make capital out of it in our political struggles. Another national defect is our greed which we exploit and excite. We lack all sense of measure, we are extremists with an anarchic individualism that has no equal. All these defects are being fostered by our politicians and the Bulgarian who is by nature most peaceful is being made pugnacious by our dremagogues who rouse his low instincts and incite him against his brethren. Bulgarians love science and knowledge and they should be guided towards this goal, for while absorbed in creative work their bad instincts will slumber. Although very suspicious, if once confidence is instilled they become extremely credulous. So long as a government uses force there will be no pacification in Bulgaria. Only democracy will give a government of order. Violence and hatred does not create anything lasting but on the contrary will further deepen the existing chasm between rulers and ruled".

Unfortunately M. Kosturkov's prognostication as to the efficacy of democracy was wrong. Bulgaria secured in 1931 a really democratically elected government which to all appearance was perfectly democratic in its composition yet it brought and engendered disorder, and what was most surprising, it encompassed the overthrov of M. Kosturkov himself, who as all will admit, was the only true representative of democracy in the Cabinet. M. Sakuzov, the veteran leader of the Social-democrats was apparently better inspired when he admitted in the Sobranye on December 24, 1926: „Such popular forces as come to the surface are incapable of coordination and harmonious co-operation The Agrarian regime dealt a stuning blow to the conception of a government by the popular masses".

The Bulgarian is characterised by a sense of fairness and honesty in his dealings with his fellow-men, this is in striking contrast with his attitude towards the State which he does not scruple to cheat or despoil because he believes

181 641 that he need not stand on ceremony with it since it has mercilessly exploited him. He is generally a man who will abide by his promise but he expects that others will likewise do so, and it is very often disregard for assumed obligations that leads the Bulgarian to wreak savage vengeance on the person who breaks a compact.

181 157 In spite of the fact that the Bulgarian people have been subjected for centuries to a rigorous negative selection, for all outstanding personalities were either exterminated by the Turks with whom they necessarily entered in conflict, or became denationalised by offering their services to more advanced nations, in the midst of which they alone could exert their talents, they, nevertheless may be considered as intellectually one of the most gifted of the Balkan peoples.

The value of a people is not gauged by the level of the average individual, but by that of the exceptional men belonging to it; such at least is the opinion of leading sociologists such as Dr. G. le Bon, and Wm. Mc. Dougall so that in this respect Bulgarians have little cause to envy their neighbours. The appearance of exceptional individuals amongst the Bulgarian people has been noted even by Prof. Jovan Cvijić, who writes in his „La Peninsule Balkanique", p. 479:

„De cette très ancienne histoire il y a un fait à retenir, c'est l'apparition d'individus doués d'une volonté extraordinairement puissante. . . La prépondérance de ces fortes individualités nous frappe encore dans les époques plus récentes de l'histoire bulgare, même après la liberation. Le personnage le plus representatif à cet égard fut Stefan Stambulov. Les politiciens bulgares paraissent doués d'une force de volonté plus agissante que ceux des autres types yougoslaves etc"

If in one generation from amongst five million Bulgarians, arose at least three men of genius such as Slaveikoff, Vazoff and Mihailovski this proves that the Bulgarians are a stock worth conserving, not only for